

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 AGRE-00 OES-07 EB-08
USIE-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 AID-05 COME-00 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02
OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 FEA-01 CEA-01 INT-05
STR-05 ITC-01 /109 W
-----096975 292206Z /75

O R 291800Z SEP 77
FM USINT HAVANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 211
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD US CU
SUBJ: CASTRO SPEAKS ON INTERESTS SECTIONS/US EMBARGO

1. FIDEL CASTRO, IN SEPTEMBER 28 SPEECH MARKING TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF COMITES DE LA DEFENSA DE LA REVOLUCION (CDR), CITED EVOLUTION FOR THE BETTER IN US-CUBAN RELATIONS BUT CAUTIONED IT WOULD BE SLOW PROCESS AND CONDEMNED CONTINUATION OF US EMBARGO. HE EMPHASIZED THAT CUBAN REGIME AND POLICIES WOULD NOT UNDERGO CHANGE.

2. AFTER CONDEMNING POLICIES OF PREVIOUS US ADMINISTRATIONS, CASTRO POINTED, FOR FIRST TIME PUBLICLY, WE BELIEVE, TO OPENING OF INTERESTS SECTIONS IN WASHINGTON AND HAVANA AND DESCRIBED THEIR FUNCTIONS AND SIZE. HIS STATEMENTS, HOWEVER, WERE CAREFULLY HEDGED TO AVOID AROUSING EXCESSIVE EXPECTATIONS.

3. LATER IN SPEECH, CASTRO PROVIDED MORE REVEALING PICTURE OF CUBAN MOTIVATIONS ON US POLICY BY POINTING TO BAD ECONOMIC STRAITS IN WHICH CUBA FINDSITSELF. CASTRO SAID THAT, IF IT WERE NOT FOR
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FAVORABLE TERMSON WHICH HAVANA SELLS SUGAR, AND BUYS PETROLEUM FROM, USSR, CUBA WOULD BE IN DESPERATE POSITON. AS IF RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC NAY-SAYERS OF CLOSE CUBAN LINKS WITH USSR, CASTRO POINTED OUT THAT, AT CURRENT FREE MARKET PRICES, ENTIRE CUBAN SUGAR CROP WOULD NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO PURCHASE 8 MILLION TONS OF FUEL WHICH CUBA IMPORTS ANNUALLY, NOT TO MENTION OTHER CUBAN NEEDS.

4. HAVING ACKNOWLEDGED FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMIC LINKS WITH USSR, CASTRO THEN ALLUEDED TO UNSPECIFIED STEPS WHICH CUBA WAS TAKING TO IMPROVE ITS BAD ECONOMIC SITUATION. LEAVING LITTLE DOUBT THAT HE WAS REFERRING TO THE OPEINING TOWARD THE US, HE MOVED IMMEDIATELY TO THE ISSUE OF THE US ECONOMIC EMBARGO AND US ASSERTIONS OF A NEED FOR COMPENSATION FOR EXPROPRIATED PROPERTIES. CASTRO SAID THAT CUBAN ECONOMY HAS BEEN DAMAGED BY EMBARGO AND THAT US SHOULD PAY IDEMNITY TO CUBA. CASTRO THEN ASSERTED, WITH SOME VINDICTIVENESS, THAT CUBA COULD PAY COMPENSATION TOUS OUT OF IDEMNITY PAID TO CUBA.

5. COMMENT: CASTRO'S MENTION OF INTERESTS SECTIONS COUPLED WITH HIS ECONOMIC REMARKS LEAVE LITTLE DOUBT THAT CUBANS CONTINUE TO DESIRE FORWARD PROGRESS ON CUBAN-US RELATIONS. YET CASTRO'S REMARKS ON THE UNSHAKABILITY OF CUBAN POLICIES AND ON COMPENSATION ILLUSTRATE THAT CUBANS NOT PREPARED TO GIVE WAY EASILY ON CONTENTIOUS ISSUES. ALBEIT CAREFULLY HEDGED, DESCRIPTION BY CASTRO OF TREND IN US-CUBAN RELATIONS PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT ON ANNIVERSARY OF CDR, AN ORGANIZATION ORIGINALLY DESIGNED TO EXTIRPATE US INFLUENCE. ALSO, WHILE CASTRO'S STATEMENT ON COMPENSATION ISSUE CAN HARDLY BE CALLED HOPEFUL SIGN, IT DID MARK A REAFFIRMATION IN PRINCIPLE OF CUBA'S WILLINGNESS AT LEAST TO ADDRESS, AND POSSIBLY TO NEGOTIATE ON, ISSUE.

6. USINT UNDERSTANDS THAT CARLOSRAFAEL RODRIGUEZ DELIVERED FOREIGN POLICY ADDRESS, SEPTEMBER 24, AT CLOSED SESSION OF CDR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONGRESS. RODRIGUEZ MENTIONED, INTER ALIA, PANAMA CANAL TREATIES, PUERTO RICO, AND ANGOLA. AS SOON AS FULL TEXT OF RODRIGUEZ AND CASTRO SPEECHES ARE PUBLISHED, AS IS LIKELY, USINT WILL PROVIDE FURTHER COMMENTS.
LANE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, FOREIGN RELATIONS, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 29-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977HAVANA00235
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770355-1061
Format: TEL
From: HAVANA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977099/aaaaahes.tel
Line Count: 99
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: cb2d4a4b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1360121
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CASTRO SPEAKS ON INTERESTS SECTIONS/US EMBARGO
TAGS: ETRD, US, CU, (CASTRO, FIDEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/cb2d4a4b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009